Research Article

AN INVESTIGATION ON PREPOSITIONS AND GROUPS OF PREPOSITIONS IN FARSI AND GERMAN

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ABSTRACT

Prepositions have different meanings in German and Persian. These linguistic elements can be utilized to express a sense of place, time, and dimension. Due to the extent and diversity of the preposition, it is not possible to take into account all the prepositions in a scientific study. Moreover, prepositions are differently defined within various languages. Hence, the present paper deals with investigating some repetitive German prepositions and comparing them with Persian prepositions. The Persian and German prepositions indicate the numerous similarities between these two languages; however, there are some obvious differences in some cases.

Keywords: Prepositions. Prepositional groups. Contrastive studies. Similarities and differences

INTRODUCTION

Contrastive studies in linguistics have a long history since confrontation occurs automatically whenever languages collide. According to Krzeszowski (1972), contrastive studies dated back thousands of years ago. In this regard, some comparisons were made between Latin and Greek in the twelfth century (Szemerényi 1980).

Nickel (1985) mentioned Sir William Jones as the pioneer in contrastive linguistics studying similarities in Sanskrit and European languages. His studies are considered as models for subsequent research within Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin languages. In Germany, contrastive studies were triggered by Friedrich Schlegel, followed by Franz Bopp who investigated the Indo-European languages by influencing Eshgel's ideas and published a book on this issue in 1816. The history of contrastive linguistics in the twentieth century can be divided into three sections: The first section, which coincides with the beginning of the formation of contrastive linguistics, dates back to the 1960s. Robert (1957) and Fries (1945), as the founders of this hypothesis, later called the contrastive hypothesis of language. In this hypothesis, it is believed that the learner learns a foreign language based on his/her mother tongue and adapts the structure of his/her mother tongue to the foreign language structure. It is assumed that the learning process is facilitated by the similarities between the mother tongue and the foreign language and the differences cause slowness and disruption in teaching a foreign language. Robert (1957) published a book "Linguistics across Cultures" that is related to behaviorism in language teaching and led to a strong claim in the contrastive hypothesis of language. Afterward, the contrastive language hypothesis claimed the possibility to predict students' errors based on their mother tongue. This hypothesis is no longer valid scientifically today.

The second section, or period of contrastive linguistics stagnation, began in 1959. Chomsky (1959) was one critic of the contrastive linguistics hypothesis in 1959. He challenged this hypothesis in his book "Contrastive Analysis Approach". After raising the criticism of the contrastive hypothesis of language, another hypothesis was formed called the *identity hypothesis*, which was mainly influenced by the thoughts of (Corder 1967; Dulay and Burt 1973). The language identity hypothesis is based on the principle that the process of learning a foreign language, similar to learning a mother tongue, occurs in our mind. The contrastive linguistics hypothesis was mainly criticized for the part claiming the possibility of predicting learners' errors in terms of the centrality of their mother tongue.

The third section is the period of returning the contrastive hypothesis recrystallized in the 1970s and 1980s, both in theorizing and in the practical form of language teaching. The revival of the contrastive hypothesis was influenced by the new view of the interlanguage hypothesis founded by Selinker (1972). Since then, this hypothesis has been used in contrastive studies, particularly in mother tongue interferences on foreign language learning.

Considering the new perspective of the contrastive hypothesis, a huge deal of research has been performed on German grammar contrastive studies. For example, Rauh (1995) assessed the German and English prepositions contrastively. Moreover, Fries (1945) compared German and Greek prepositions, Wilhelm (1999) compared German and Istanbul Turkish prepositions, and Dengscherz (2009) compared German and Hungarian prepositions. Several writers in Iran have considered German prepositions in the field of language teaching so far. However, it is of note that prepositions have been incorporated into German grammar books as a part of grammar issues in almost all published works. The contrastive studies of (Zoroufi 1990; Alborzi 1997; Haddadi and Saidi Tavakoli 2016) on German and Persian prepositions are in this regard.

Prepositions in German and Persian

Prepositions or *piṣvazhes* are morphological words indicating the relation of one noun or pronoun to another noun or pronoun. They usually come before or after those in German and affect their Kasus states. Linguists have different opinions regarding the exact number of prepositions in German since the number of these letters is limited and countable according to Wittich (1969) and unlimited and incrementing according to Engel (1996). The prepositions are defined inversely in various German grammar sources, for which there are different classifications.

Eisenberg (2006: 36) considers prepositions as non-morphological words and explains that prepositions always come next to a noun (Nomen) or a pronoun (Pronomen) and connect the words or groups of words.

Duden (1995, 367), a comprehensive German grammar reference book, describes prepositions as non-morphological words determining the grammatical form of the associated noun. This property is called Kasus in German. The präposition is originally a Latin word, praeponere, which literally means "to precede". Lutz (1999) takes into account the prepositions as non-morphological words and believes that these letters appear with the noun or noun group and determine the grammatical role or Kasus. Prepositions in German are classified based on their use; however, a proposition may be placed in all groups, such as auf, which is divided into four groups as follows:

-       Prepositions with local usage such as in, auf, zu, and bei
-       Prepositions with the temporal use like ab, an, auf, and bei
-       Prepositions with modal usage such as an, auf, and aus
-       Prepositions with causal use like auf, aus, and halber
-       Prepositions used to express opposition to an issue, konzessiv such as trotz, and ungeachtet

Engel (1988: 691) indicates that prepositions (so beiderseits, innerhalb, kraft, namens, and trotz) that are less commonly utilized in German have their precise meaning and have many meanings that are changed depending on their use. This is opposed to prepositions, which are very common (an, auf, durch, für, mit, nach, and zu).

The word "preposition" entered the Persian from Arabic. Some main prepositions and many nouns and adverbs as well can play the role of prepositions in the contemporary Persian. Non-original prepositions are combined with the next word by taking an "e". The preposition in Persian is also called "*pişvazhe*" and "*Harf-e-pişin*" since this element is often placed before the word in the sentence. The grammarians defined the preposition differently and divided these letters contrarily from the other. Bateni (1990, 175) is among the researchers who divided prepositions into two categories. First, those prepositions that are utilized without "e" (Kara, in Persian), such as "ba, ta, az, dar, be, bar, joz" and the second group, the prepositions that take "e", such as kenar-e, lab-e, bar-e, bara-ye, nazd-e, az bara-ye, and bedun-e. The so-called compound or multi-part preposition is made up of prepositions and nouns, such as "az ru-ye, az bara-ye, dar pa-ye, dar piş-e, and be sou-ye". The compound prepositions are like stereotypical terms or fixed combinations that are used with a noun and they always follow another noun group as a descriptive element. The simple proposition of such combinations is often omitted, and the remainder (ru-ye, pa-ye, piş-e, and su-ye) acts as the noun group's core (ru-ye miz, pa-ye divar, piş-e rou, and sou-ye ou). Ahmadi Giwi and Anwari (2010) divides prepositions in Persian into two simple and compound parts. Simple prepositions include letters that have a part such as "az, be, ta, and joz" and compound prepositions that consist of two or more sections such as "az bara-ye and dar piş-e". Ahmadi Giwi and Anwari (2010) indicated repositions as the elements linking a word or group of words to a verb, noun, or adjective in a sentence. According to this scholar, what follows the prepositions is called a "motamem". Homayunfarrox (1960) considers the term "*harf-e pişin*" for prepositions and considers the position of *harf-e pişins* "before" the noun group as indicated by their name. In Persian, especially in poems, some prepositions are used "after" the noun group:

Ço beşnid rostam saraş χireh gaşt   jahan pişe çeşm <u>andaraş</u> tireh gaşt (Ferdosi 2017)

Be zin <u>andar</u> afgand gorz-e geran   ço   amad   be   nazdik-e mazandaran (Ferdosi 2017)
Be bidariş fetneh bar χat-o-χal be   χaab   <u>andaraş</u> payband-e χial (Alizadeh 2009)
Ta del be mehrat dade-am dar bahr-e fekr oftadeh-am   çon dar namaz estade-am goui be mehrab <u>andar-i</u> (Alizadeh 2009)

In German, some postpositions are placed after the word (noun or pronoun) and used in an informal mode such as:
Petra ging die Straße <u>entlang</u>.
Die Brüder streiten sich des Geldes <u>wegen</u>.
Es herrschte gespannte Stimmung der Nachricht <u>zufolge</u>.
In "Panj ostad", Qarib et al. (1987) defined prepositions as follows: "Prepositions are words expressing the state between two words and placing the subsequent word as "motamem" so that the meaning of the first word of the second citation is not completed". In Persian, a "motamem "is normally located after the prepositions, while in German, the prepositions determine the Kasusrektion (Nominativ, Genitiv, Dativ, and Akkusativ). Each preposition appears in German along with a Kasusrektion in the sentence. In general, most prepositions are in a specific Kasusrektion; however, some prepositions come with two grammatical modes. For example, prepositions such as für, ohne, gegen, durch, bis, and um and some

others are always in Accusative, the prepositions mit, von, zu, bei, aus, nach, ab, au-er, and seit are always in the Dativ mode, and the prepositions infolge, angesichts, innerhalb, wegen, mittels, seitens, zugunsten, zwecks, dank, trotz, anlässilich, anstelle, außerhalb, längs, mangels, ungeachtet, and zuzüglich appear in Genitiv mode. Furthermore, some prepositions such as Zug um Zug, zu Fuß, and über Nacht appear without Kasusrektion.

The Kasusrektion is different for front and back prepositions. Some of these prepositions were selected in the following table, whose Kasusrektion was changed based on their position concerning the noun or pronoun. Some sources, including Duden, offer a variety of Kasus options for various pre- and postpositions.

Table 1 Kasus-Rektion

	Präposition	Postposition
durch	Akkusativ	Akkusativ
nach	Dativ	Akkusativ
über	Dativ/ Akkusativ	Akkusativ
entlang	Dativ/ Genitiv/Akkusativ	Akkusativ/Dativ

In Persian, the main prepositions are "az, ba, bi, bar, be, ta, dar, and joz". One of the features of this group of letters is that they do not take "e" in combination with the next word and have many meanings like the preposition in German. In some cases, Persian prepositions appear followed by each other, such as "be-joz". In contemporary informal Persian, the preposition is sometimes omitted; e.g. "man kouçe-am".

In Persian, prepositions consisting of one word are called simple prepositions, such as "az, be, and bara-ye" and prepositions containing more than one word like dar nazd-e, and az piş-e are called compound prepositions. The prepositions mainly consist of a preposition and a noun or adverb, and they are more numerous than simple prepositions; so, they can be further increased.

Prepositions in Persian and German are not morphologically changed and are syntactically considered as communication elements in both languages. Prepositions semantically determine spatial, temporal, dimensional, and other inter-element relationships. For example, the preposition "von" often means "as" Ablativ. Sometimes, two prepositions appear immediately after each other in German. For instance, bis in the preposition group bis zum Krankenhaus has spatial meaning and has temporal meaning in bis zum nächsten Tag. In German, the prepositions and postpositions Adposition govern the noun group after or before themselves, which is exactly opposed to Persian. In Persian, the descriptive elements of the prepositional group are less used and are often regarded as fixed and stereotypical combinations.

Also, "ra" is usually utilized before the adjective element of the prepositional group; however, it may be used after it. The displacement of "ra" changes the meaning of a sentence:
a.   Akharin tamas-e telefoni-e u ba madar-esh ra shenidam.
Ich habe seinen letzten Anruf mit seiner Mutter gehört.
b.   Akharin tamas-e telefoni-e u ra ba madar-esh shenidam.
Ich habe seinen letzten Anruf mit seiner Mutter gehört.

There is a functional difference between the above two Persian sentences (a and b). The question in A deals with the person's last phone call to his/her mother while the question in sentence B is whether the call was the last phone call. Nevertheless, in German, the equivalents of these two Persian sentences are ambiguous not indicating a subtle difference between the two Persian sentences.

Prepositional groups may take different syntactic roles in the sentence in addition to the descriptive role in the noun group. The prepositional role of the "object" in Er wartet auf einen Freund and the adverbial role in Er wartet auf der Post are some examples in this regard.

Prepositional groups in the descriptive role may also have two syntactic reflections: the objective reflection within the noun group such as auf Gesundheit in Die Hoffnung auf Gesundheit and the adverbial reflection within the noun group like in der Gesundheit in the sentence "Die Hoffnung in der Health". In other words, the prepositional groups expanding a noun group are either komplement or Adjunkt. Therefore, the semantic relationship between the noun group core derived from the verb and the prepositional adjective element is reflective of the relation between verb and Ergänzung in the corresponding sentence. A noun can take the role of the noun group core in case of terminology. Therefore, it can be used as a complement based on the capacity (Argument) of the verb or compulsorily like auf Gesundheit in the sentence "Ich hoffe auf Gesundheit" or as a non-compulsory complement in der Gesundheit in the sentence Ich hoffe in der Gesundheit. Indeed, the verb, valenz, inherits its capacity for each terminology element in the sense of accepting the capacity of the verb through the noun group core, if we do not consider the subject. In this case, it is indicated either as a single value or as a zero value in the following examples:

-    Die Hoffnung auf Gesundheit.
-    Die Hoffnung in der Gesundheit.
-    Ich hoffe auf die Gesundheit.
-    Ich hoffe in der Gesundheit.

In Persian, for example, the verb (such as help) inherits its capacity in the noun group (helping people) where the descriptive element of the prepositional group "be ensan-ha" is the object in its equivalent sentence. However, in the noun group (komak-e ensan-ha), the genitive element (ensan-ha), is considered as the subject.

Selecting complement in both languages depends on the core capacity of the noun group, the capacity of the verb, and the corresponding sentence (from which the noun group has a descriptive element).

For example, the Persian adjective element in the sentence (an mard rou-ye sandali neşaste ast) is an internal noun group comprising the core of the follower (rou) and the added "e" (ye) and the genitive word (sandali). However, its German equivalent is an adjective element of the prepositional group (auf dem Stuhl) in the sentence "Der Mann sitzt auf dem Stuhl".

Some complements of descriptive (objective) adjectives in Persian may appear with prepositions such as (Amiχte be rang) or with additional 'e' such as (Amiχte-ye rang) while others may appear only with prepositions (Amiχte ba). In the following, Persian and German prepositions are compared based on the classification of Samiian (1994):

Table 2 Persian and German prepositions

Real prepositions	Prepositions with a compulsory e'	Prepositions with an optional e'
dar → in, auf *ta* → bis, bis zum *az* → von, aus, ab *be* → nach, zu, an, auf	*zir-e* → unter *piş-e* → vor, neben, in der Nähe von, bei, an *kenar-e* → neben, bei, an *beyn-e* → zwischen, in der Mitte von *poşt-e* → hinter, auf der Rückseite von *biroun-e* → außerhalb *sar-e* → vorderseite, an *daχel-e* → in, auf *paeen-e* → unter *χarej-e* → außerhalb *nazdik-e* → in der Nähe von, bei *mian-e* → zwischen *wassat-e* → zwischen *dour-e* → um	*tou-ye* → in, auf *rou-ye* → auf, über *pahlou-ye* → neben, bei, an, zu *bala-ye* → über, auf *kenar-e* → neben, an

	atraf-e → in der Umgebung *nazd-e* → bei, an *taraf-e* → zu, nach	

CONCLUSION

In summary, prepositional groups, in both Persian and German languages have other important roles, such as objective and adverbial roles, in addition to their adjective function. The descriptive element of the prepositional group in both languages is placed after the noun core. However, descriptive elements of the prepositional group are located after the noun core in both languages. Nevertheless, the descriptive elements of the prepositional group are more extensively used in German than in Persian. Therefore, the prepositional descriptive elements that are not used in Persian can be expressed through other descriptive elements (e.g. genitive words). Based on the points above, comparing the prepositions in two languages indicates the difference between the two categories further. This difference can be explained as follows First, the semantic relationship of prepositions in Persian and German is never considered as a one-to-one relationship and the prepositions have different meanings in different situations. Second, prepositions are completely distinct from each other grammatically and possess a different structure. Third, the location of prepositions is not necessarily consistent in Persian and German.

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